# A PROPOSAL

FOR

## *SUPPLYING LONDON WITH BREAD,*

AT AN UNIFORM PRICE,

FROM ONE YEAR TO ANOTHER,

ACCORDING TO

## AN ANNUAL ASSIZE,

By a Plan that may be applied to every Corporation in the Kingdom; would give Encouragement to Agriculture, and would prevent an extravagant Riſe of Prices in caſe of future ſcanty Harveſts.

LONDON;

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1798.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author wiſhes the preſent diſcourſe to be conſidered as a ſupplement to the Eſſay lately publiſhed by him, entitled, "The Eſſential Principles of the Wealth of "Nations, illuſtrated in oppoſition to ſome "falſe doctrines of Dr. Adam Smith, and "others." That Eſſay points to the direct means of promoting *the Wealth and Strength of the Nation*; and this relates *to the Contentment of the people.*

A PROPOSAL

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FOR

# SUPPLYING LONDON WITH BREAD,

## AT AN UNIFORM PRICE, &c.

A NATION enjoying the bleſſing of a wiſe Government, and poſſeſſing an extenſive and fertile territory, will conſider the cultivation of its lands, as the beſt ſource of its wealth and power. Were this ſource to be adequate to the general wants, and always equal in point of abundance, general comfort would be the concomitant of that abundance. But as the ſource flows irregularly, giving at one ſeaſon a ſuperabundance, and at another not affording a ſufficiency, while the wants of a Nation remain nearly the ſame at all times, prudent policy would dictate, that the ſuper-abundance of one ſeaſon ſhould be collected and preſerved for ſupplying the deficiency of another. In other words the foreſight of Government ought to be ſyſtematically directed, to prevent the inſtability of the prices of the chief article of the neceſſaries of life, by having always in ſtore, an ample ſupply of ſo eſſential a means of ſubſiſtence.

Providence has thought fit to ſubject mankind to the viciſſitudes of heat and cold, and likewiſe to the viciſſitudes of plentiful and ſcanty harveſts. What ſhould we think of the wiſdom of a people, who made no proviſion againſt the extremes of heat and cold. If the policy of ſuch a people would meet with cenſure, the ſame cenſure will moſt juſtly apply to a people, who make no proviſion againſt the extremes of plenty and want, in reſpect to neceſſary articles of ſubſiſtence. Want of ſuch articles is to a human being no leſs grievous, no leſs afflicting, than the want of genial warmth; for it makes no difference to a man, whether he be ſtarved with hunger, or ſtarved with cold. The happy and well governed Country is that, where the people in general are in ſecurity of not ſuffering by either. In this reſpect, to our reproach, Great Britain is not yet entitled to be called that Happy Country; for though by means of houſes, of fires, woollens, furs, &c. we have made proviſion againſt ſuffering by the extreme of cold, we ſtill continue without a ſyſtem to ſecure us againſt ſuffering by a ſcanty harveſt.

The eſtabliſhing of ſuch a ſyſtem, would be of great importance to the proſperity of Great Britain and Ireland, as it would be the means of removing from the maſs of the people of both Iſlands, much real cauſe of murmuring, and of ſubſtituting in their place, ſatisfaction and con-

contentment. Every one will readily acknowlege, that a good workman would never have a ſatisfied mind, if he were to be paid 15s. wages in one week, and only 12s. in another, never knowing when he was to receive full, and when ſcanty payment. But it would not alter the vexatious ſituation to ſuch a workman, were his wages to continue uniformly the ſame, if by the inſtability of prices in the markets, he found he could not purchaſe with them ſo much by a fourth or a fifth in one week, as he might have purchaſed with them in another.

Since we boaſt of having large warehouſes for tobacco, for ſugar, for tea, and other articles of merchandize, why ſhould we not have warehouſes for the article of merchandize, of the greateſt intrinſic value. We are told "that in January "1796, in conſequence of an inundation of the "Clyde, the damage ſuſtained at Port Glaſgow "in ſugar, amounted to 30,000l. beſides the loſs "in tobacco, which was very great." There is no mention of any loſs ſuſtained there in corn, probably becauſe no corn was there ſtored up, from the impolicy of not deeming it an article worthy of being ſtored up. Port Glaſgow, in that reſpect, is only a miniature of London; for were the ſtores of tobacco, of ſugar, and of tea warehouſed in the Capital to be known, and compared with the ſtores of corn, the former would probably be found to be twenty times

greater than the latter. Some ſhadow of reaſon indeed may ſeemingly be alledged for this diſproportion; for it may be ſaid that corn being a home commodity, the ſtoring of it is truſted to the farmers, who produce it. This apology would have ſome weight, were the people of London, or of any other great mercantile city, to know exactly where the ſtores of corn were to be found, and how much was ſtored. But as theſe two moſt eſſential points have hitherto been left in obſcurity, and ſuffered to remain unknown, the practice of London in regard to the ſupply of the inhabitants appears to be altogether unſyſtematical, and no way to correſpond to the intelligence that might be expected, from thoſe who direct the affairs of this great Capital.

According to the preſent precarious ſupply of the London corn market, it would appear as if nature ſent us fifty two harveſts in one year, continually varying in point of abundance, and thereby continually ſubjecting the inhabitants to a variation of prices. But nature ſends us only one harveſt of grain in one year; and it is from our preſent want of ſyſtem that the abundance or ſcantineſs of the harveſt is left wholly unaſcertained, whence follows the inſtability of ſupply and of price, during the whole twelve months, ſo diſgraceful to the police of the Metropolis.

In Scotland, where the price of grain has long been uſed as a ſtandard of regulation for a variety of

of payments, there exiſts a very judicious inſtitution, that fixes that price in proportion to the abundance or ſcantineſs of the crop. In the month of March of each year a number of land-owners, farmers, and corn-dealers, aſſemble in each county, by order of the Sheriff, and upon conſidering the ſtate of the preceding harveſt, declare the rate of the prices of the different grains, which rate ſerves as a legal ſtandard of commutation for that year. This inſtitution has the good effect of keeping the markets nearly uniform, during the whole year; but as ſome harveſts may be abundant, and others ſcanty, it cannot operate to keep the markets nearly uniform for a ſucceſſion of years. That moſt deſirable object, the eſtabliſhment of Granaries, under proper regulations, would alone accompliſh, by creating a demand in ſeaſons of great abundance, and by furniſhing a ſupply in times of ſcarcity. At preſent, by our improvident regulations, and general want of ſyſtem, in regard to the corn laws, an abundant harveſt is a thing to be dreaded. It is certainly not a proof of a wiſe policy, to turn the bleſſing of Providence into a curſe; yet ſuch is profeſſedly the effect of our police, in reſpect to the moſt neceſſary article of ſubſiſtence. Some writers on Agriculture have lately declared, that three ſucceſſive plentiful crops would ruin the farmers; and a rich proprietor of Scotland, I remember ſaid to me, ſeveral years ago, " This

" year's harveſt is ſo plentiful, and corn is ſo " cheap, that I ſhall loſe, in my rents, 200l."

Now what is all the induſtry of the farmer naturally directed to, but to have as plentiful a crop as poſſible? Where is the farmer that would not rather reap three quarters of wheat from an acre, than two quarters? But in conſequence of our preſent improvident and abſurd policy, in regard to corn, the farmer acts unwiſely in aiming at a plentiful crop. In direct contradiction to all our eſſays and treatiſes, for adding to the fertility of the ſoil, and for rendering the ſeed more prolific, we by our want of ſyſtem, in fact and reality, tell the farmer, " You throw away " your labour in endeavouring to procure an " abundant crop; you will not thereby render your- " ſelf any richer; you will only have additional " trouble, in reaping, threſhing, winnowing, " and carrying to market, and your three " quarters of wheat will bring you no more mo- " ney, than if you had raiſed but two quarters." Thus our preſent falſe ſyſtem counteracts, in the moſt direct manner, the agricultural induſtry of the Kingdom. While ſuch a falſe policy is adhered to, it is vain to expect that agriculture can be brought to ſuch a flouriſhing ſtate, as it might otherwiſe be raiſed to. Can any thing be a greater diſcouragement to the farmer to produce plenty, than to find that the plenty he produces is hurtful to himſelf, nay, is even hurtful to the nation,

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by being the ſource of idleneſs to labourers and manufacturers.

The remedy for this complicated miſchief ought to be moſt carefully, and moſt ſpeedily ſought for by a wiſe Legiſlature; and the eſtabliſhment of granaries will be found to afford that remedy, for many years to come. For ſuppoſing prudent and good policy required, that one whole year's ſupply ſhould be ſtored, and that the harveſts for a ſeries of years, were as abundant as it was in the year 1750, the year of greateſt exportation, the granaries would create a demand for the whole ſurplus of each harveſt for eight years, as the greateſt exportation has been computed not to exceed one eighth of the yearly conſumption. General Smith's propoſal of obviating a future ſcarcity, by ſtoring a ſufficient ſupply of foreign corn, will, I doubt not, upon a ſlight reflection, be reprobated by himſelf, as well as by every other lover of his Country.

The granaries ought to be filled by the ſurpluſes of our own harveſts, conſequently the ſtoring them with a whole year's ſupply would, for eight years at leaſt, give as great encouragement to the farmers as they ever received from the greateſt exportation of one year. The attention of Government ought to be directed to create thoſe ſurpluſes, which unhappily our lands do not at preſent yield, though ſuſceptible of producing them to a much greater extent than thoſe

abovementioned, were agriculture to receive thoſe Parliamentary encouragements to which it is ſo juſtly entitled.

In order that Parliamentary Encouragement ſhould be founded juſtly, it ought to be founded on a minute and accurate knowledge of the number of acres, annually ſown with grain, in each pariſh, over the whole Kingdom. All judicious deciſion and regulation, naturally depend upon true and detailed information; a principle very properly, on this very ſubject, applied by Mr. Pitt, who in the parliamentary debates, on the late ſcarcity, moſt judiciouſly obſerved, " *That if* " *every man knew what ſtock of grain was in* " *the Kingdom, the price of wheat would not* " *have riſen to ſuch a pitch.*" Moſt certainly not. And in order to know what ſtock of grain is in the Kingdom, the firſt ſtep is to know what is the number of acres annually ſown with grain over the Kingdom. In England and Wales the law of tythes ſuppoſes this knowlege familiar to the Clergy. In the hop counties the produce of hops is annually aſcertained without any trouble or inconvenience; and in like manner the number of acres annually ſown with grain might be aſcertained. The wiſe corn law of Hiero, King of Sicily, the beloved Monarch of the Sicilians, is mentioned with approbation by Cicero, in his accuſation of Verres; and by that law the number of huſbandmen in that iſland was annually regiſtered by the Magiſtrates. " Lege Hiero-

" nica,"

" nica," he ſays, " numerus aratorum quotannis " apud magiſtratus publice ſubſcribitur."* Several of the reverend authors of the Reports in the

* On their protection depended the proſperity of the ſtate. Thoſe who have treated of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire have not given ſufficient attention to the conſequences of the oppreſſion of the huſbandmen in the different Provinces. There needed only a ſucceſſion of Verreses to have ruined the moſt powerful Empire, and Verres had many ſucceſſors. A ſpecimen of his deſpotic tyranny Cicero gives us in the following paſſage, which I have tranſlated.

Quot acceperit Aratores agri Leontini Verres? Octoginta tres. Quot anno tertio profiteantur? Triginta duo. Unum et quinquaginta Aratores ita video dejectos, et his ne viearii quidem ſucceſſerint. Quot Aratores adveniente te fuerunt agri Matucenſis? Videmus ex literis publicis centum et octoginta unus. Quid anno tertio? Centum et unus. Octoginta Aratores unus ager iſtius injuria deſiderat; atque adeo noſtra reſpublica,(quonium illa Populi Romani vectigalia ſunt,) hunc tot patrum familius numerum deſiderat et repoſcit. Ager Herbitenſis primo anno habuit Aratores ducentos quinquaginta ſep-

How many huſbandmen of the diſtrict of Leontum, did Verres receive? 83. How many in his third year were regiſtered? 32. I thus find 51 huſbandmen ruined; and ſo completely, that the farms they had deſerted were left without occupiers. How many were the huſbandmen of the Matucenſian diſtrict upon your arrival in your province? We ſee by the Public Regiſter they were 181. How was it in the third year? 101. Thus a ſingle diſtrict by this man's oppreſſion has to lament the loſs of 80 huſbandmen; and thereby our Commonwealth (ſince all theſe farmers are tributaries of the Roman people) has loſt;

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the Statiſtical Account of Scotland have enumerated in tables, the number of acres ſown in their pariſhes, and the average produce of thoſe acres, which gives a proof of the great practicability of ſuch an enumeration over the whole Kingdom. Upon ſuch a baſis as this all legiſlative proceedings for ſecuring an ample ſupply of corn, or for preventing a ſcarcity of it, ought to be founded.

tem; tertio centum viginti. Hinc centum triginta ſeptem patres familias extorres profugerunt. Argyrenſis ager, quorum hominum, quam honeſtorum, quam locupletum! ducentos quinquaginta Aratores habuit primo anno præturæ tuæ. Quid tertio anno? Octoginta, quemadmodum Legatos Argyrenſes recitare ex publicis literis audiſtis. Proh Dii immortales! Si ex provincia tota centum ſeptuaginta ejeciſſes poſſeſſue ſeveris judicibus ſalvus eſſe? Unus ager Argyrenſis centum ſeptuaginta Aratoribus inanior quum ſit, vos conjecturam totius provinciæ non facietis.

and has to demand of this man ſuch a number of families. The Herbitenſian diſtrict had in the firſt year 257 huſbandmen; in the third year 120. Hence 137 families, to fly from this man's tyranny, have abandoned their native ſoil. The Argyrenſian diſtrict in the firſt year of thy Pretorſhip had 250 huſbandmen; what men! how reſpectable! how opulent! How was it in the third year? 80, as ye have heard the Argyrenſian deputies read from the Public Regiſters. Oh immortals! if from the whole province you had expelled 170, can you expect to be acquitted by impartial judges. Since the ſingle Argyrenſian diſtrict has fewer huſbandmen by 170, will ye not ye judges from thence form a conjecture of the oppreſſion of the whole Province?

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On this point, an actual and accurate ſurvey is juſt as requiſite as it would be in forming a correct map of a Country.

Suppoſing the number of acres ſown in any one year, to have yielded a full ſupply for that year, but no ſurplus, and that Government wiſhed to have a ſurplus equal to that of the year of greateſt exportation, or equal to one eighth of the whole, the moſt natural way to obtain this ſurplus, is to induce the farmers to increaſe the number of acres ſown with corn, one eighth. Now unleſs the number of ſown acres of any preceding year be known, the deſired augmentation of ſown acres in a ſubſequent year cannot be aſcertained, which is a reaſon for the number of ſown acres being particularly known every year.

If an additional eighth be added to the number of ſown acres, the conſequence to be preſumed is that the enſuing crop will be one eighth more abundant, which eighth being ſtored up in the granaries, will leave the remainder at the ſame market price as though no additional eighth had been produced, and there had been no granaries to make a demand for that eighth. Thus in a ſucceſſion of eight harveſts, a full ſupply of corn *of our own growth*, for a whole year, may be placed in the granaries, and in the mean while the conſumption of every year may not in the ſmalleſt degree be abridged. Should a very plentiful harveſt produce a ſurplus of one fourth, inſtead of a

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ſurplus of one eighth, the granaries will prevent this ſurplus from lowering the prices to ſuch a degree as to injure the farmer, and promote idleneſs among manufacturers. Such a plenty will only have the good effect of filling the granaries ſo much ſooner; and till they be filled with at leaſt one year's ſupply, exportation ought to be prohibited, however great the abundance.

While the granaries are thus filling, ſhould the fertility of each year not exceed the uſual average, it is plain that a ſurplus produce of one eighth could only be procured, by an addition of one eighth to the number of acres under the plough. As the paſture grounds of the iſland are in extent more than four times greater than the arable grounds, this addition of one eighth to the arable grounds, would diminiſh the former not more than one 47th; * but if it were to diminiſh them a full eighth, the permutation would only contribute to increaſe the amount of the yearly income of the Nation.

This ſubject has been very minutely diſcuſſed by a very intelligent author, Arthur Dobbs, Eſq.

* For example, ſuppoſe of the 72 millions of acres, which Great Britain contains, that 56 millions can only be reckoned upon as yielding produce in corn and graſs; and that nine millions of acres are now annually in corn. If thoſe nine millions are augmented about one eighth, it will make a little more than 10 millions in corn; and deduct that eighth from the acres in paſture, theſe laſt will then be about 46 millions, inſtead of 47 millions, that is one 47th leſs.

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in his Eſſay on the Trade and Improvement of Ireland. He having compared the market prices of the Exports ariſing from graſing, with thoſe ariſing from the Export of grain, and the number of acres required to produce each, concludes that the profit upon paſture, at a medium, does not exceed 12 ſhillings and 5d. per acre; whereas at a medium the profit upon agriculture is above two pounds per acre. *Preſuming* that Mr. Dobbs's eſtimates are not far from the truth, *it* may then be concluded that the granaries *in* creating a demand for the ſurplus of grain of one eighth, would *thereby* in fact increaſe the National Income annually above one million and an half, till they ſhould be fully ſtored, with one year's ſupply.

Would it not be deemed a joyful piece of news, were it reported, that a mine of gold had been diſcovered in Great Britain, that would yield an annual ſupply to the value of a million and an half of pounds. But the eſtabliſhment of granaries would actually produce ſuch a good effect to the farmers of Great Britain for at leaſt eight years, by creating a demand for one eighth more of corn than is now produced.

As a parliamentary encouragement to the farmers to produce this additional eighth, let the ſame public bounty be given to them that was formerly given to the merchant exporters of corn. In a political view, the producers of a ſurplus have as good a right to a public recompence, as the exporters of a ſurplus, eſpecially when the granaries

naries point out a way to get rid of that ſurplus. Could the farmers ſell more than they now produce, can it be doubted but they could produce more. Now the eſtabliſhment of granaries would open a way to their ſelling one eighth more, for eight years, without lowering the common market price ſo as to leſſen their uſual gains. On the contrary, by producing the one eighth more in conſequence of the bounty, while the market prices remained unaltered, their gains would be one eighth more than uſual, excluſive of the bounty paid to them.

Allowing the bounties to be the propelling motives to this augmentation of produce, and that they amounted nearly to what they were in the year of greateſt exportation, that is, to 300,000 pounds, the farmers, by receiving this bounty, would have augmented the ſubſtantial wealth of the Country one million of quarters in the different grains of wheat, oats, and barley, or above one million and an half ſterling, that is, they will have returned 500 per cent, for the bounty beſtowed; and the nation would poſſeſs both the additional wealth, and the bounty that gave riſe to that wealth. What commerce can yield to the undertakers ſuch a return as this, and how quickly will the nation (now dropſically ſwoln with paper riches) increaſe in real vigour and opulence, by purſuing for a ſucceſſion of years ſuch a policy as may annually augment the ſtock of grain one eighth, and create an immediate home demand for that eighth,

which in future may ſave us from the impolitic meaſure of purchaſing grain at foreign markets.

To a nation poſſeſſing an extenſive territory, and favourable climate, the importation of corn is as diſgraceful as the importation of wine would be to a wine country, or the importation of coals to a country abounding with coal mines. When ſhall we hear of the importation of wine into France, for general conſumption, or of coals into Northumberland. But were our corn ſyſtem founded on the rules of true policy, the importation of corn into Great Britain, ought to be as rare a thing as the importation of wine into France, becauſe the ſoil of Great Britain in general, is, from our favourable climate, as fertile as ſome of the Countries in Europe, diſtinguiſhed for their fertility, which though as populous as Great Britain, nevertheleſs have great ſurpluſes, and export much corn. Sicily, for example, is deemed a country very fertile in corn, but from Cicero we may conclude that Great Britain is not inferior in fertility to that iſland; for in praiſing the fertility of Leontum, he ſays, the Leontines reckoned it a good crop, when they had a return of eight grains for one; and when they had ten grains for one, they thought it a very abundant harveſt. Now the arable fields in Great Britain, where the land is well managed, often yield greater returns than thoſe abovementioned; conſequently were encouragement given to create annual ſurpluſes

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by increaſing the preſent too ſcanty number of arable acres, and diminiſhing the waſtes, Great Britain might maintain double the number of her preſent inhabitants, without ever being under the neceſſity of importing corn, provided ſhe had always in ſtore a ſpare ſupply ſufficient for one or two year's conſumption.

If ſuch a ſituation is greatly to be deſired for Great Britain; and if the means for putting her in that ſituation are eaſy and practicable, what object of policy can be more deſerving of the attention of the Legiſlature, than the purſuit of thoſe means. To have ſubjects and not to be able to feed them without foreign aid, even after the worſt harveſts, when the territory would feed double the number, is nearly the ſame thing as the giving a bounty for emigration, or what is as bad, the prohibiting, by an unwritten law, the celebration of marriages, and the rearing up of children.

Part of thoſe means have been already ſtated, namely the annual regiſtration over all the kingdom, of all the acres ſown with wheat, barley, and oats. This muſt be eſtabliſhed as the firſt principle, the condition, *ſine qua non*, upon which, as upon a ſolid foundation, the whole ſyſtem of regulation muſt reſt. To aim at regulation without ſuch a firſt principle, would be as fruitleſs as to attempt to ſcale a high wall with a ſhort ladder, or like a man, who could neither read nor

write,

write, undertaking the management of a great mercantile concern upon the ſtrength of his natural genius. Nations that, like our Saxon Anceſtors, could neither read nor write, were excuſeable in having imperfect political regulations; but nations poſſeſſing the powerful inſtrument of writing, deprive themſelves in a manner of half their intelligence in not committing to regiſters, exact details in regard to territory, to income, and expenditure.

Another article likewiſe already mentioned, and the ſecond in point of importance, is the inviting the farmers to create ſurpluſes of corn, by offering them bounties on thoſe ſurpluſes, to the amount of one eighth addition, above the quantity of acres uſually ſown by them. By allowing eight ſhillings for every additional acre ſown with wheat, and four ſhillings for every additional acre in oats and barley, the proportion would approach nearly to what was formerly given to the merchants upon exportation; and from the following computation it is preſumed the ſum total of bounties thus beſtowed, would not be very different from what it was in the year of greateſt exportation. The conſumption of London in wheat, including the territory, within ten miles of the Royal Exchange, is, according to the information of a worthy and intelligent friend, lately, from his high office, at the ſource of information, 800,000 quarters annually. If we take ſix

times as much as that for the reſt of the kingdom, it will on the whole be for both 5,600,000 quarters, which at two quarters per acre, would require 2,800,000 acres in wheat. Suppoſe as many acres in oats, and as many in barley, the whole will be 8,400,000 acres. An increaſe or addition of one eighth, to each kind, would be for wheat 350,000 acres, as much in oats, and as much in barley, or on the whole 1,050,000 acres. Allowing 600,000 acres for fallows, for potatoes, beans, peaſe, &c. the whole of the acres under the plough in Great Britain, will then be about 10,000,000 acres, including the additional eighth in wheat, oats, and barley, propoſed to be entitled to the bounty. I have ſaid that the public bounty to the farmers, as above eſtimated, would probably not differ much from the ſum granted to the merchants, in the year of greateſt exportation; but were it even to exceed that ſum, the advantage to the Nation would only be proportionably greater; for an advance yielding 500 per cent. profit, would, if enlarged, only enlarge that profit.

I ſhall now proceed to conſider the capital that would be required to furniſh London with one year's ſpare ſupply of wheat, who would be the capitaliſts or proprietors of that ſupply, what profits they ought to receive on their capital, and how thoſe profits would ariſe.

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The yearly ſupply of London, ſtated at 800,000 quarters of wheat, would, at 40 ſhillings per quarter, coſt 1,600,000 pounds; at 30 ſhillings per quarter, (the market price in the year 1750) would coſt 1,200,000 pounds; and at 50 ſhillings per quarter (as it was ſold in London, in October laſt) would coſt 2,000,000 pounds. Taking even the higheſt of theſe ſums, and adding to it the expence of building the granaries, which may be eſtimated at 120,000 pounds, we ſhall have 2,120,000 pounds as the capital that would be required, in order to ſecure the Metropolis againſt the inconveniencies of a ſcarcity or dearth; and allowing ten per cent. to the capitaliſts, for expences of management and profit, this expenditure, when compared to the great public benefit thereby procured, could not but be eſteemed very inconſiderable. The City of London for example, would tax itſelf annually 212,000 pounds, in order that every family in it might be ſure of having bread nearly at the price which a harveſt of medium plenty would afford, without the riſk of ever being obliged to pay nearly double that price.

Now let us conſider how much the City of London taxes itſelf annually for its diverſions? The newly erected Play-houſe in Drury-lane is computed, when full, to contain a receipt of 750 pounds, and that of Covent Garden nearly the ſame, or both together 1500 pounds. If therefore they are open 200 nights each ſeaſon, and

only half filled each night, that will amount to 150,000 pounds. To this muſt be added one quarter as much for the Opera-houſe, or 37,500 pounds, and for the Little Theatre in the Hay-market, ſuppoſing it open 100 nights, at 100 pounds per night, 10,000 pounds; for Public Concerts as much; for Sadler's Wells as much; for Vauxhall as much; for Ranelagh 6000 pounds; for Aſtley's 6000 pounds, and the Circus 6000 pounds, the amount of the whole will be 245,500 pounds. Were this eſtimate to be made with greater accuracy, it would probably amount to a much higher ſum than is here ſtated, but ſuppoſing it even leſs than I have computed it to be, it gives a plain proof, that the inhabitants of London, may, if they pleaſe, inſure themſelves againſt any extraordinary riſe in the price of bread, for leſs money than what they now pay yearly for their Public Amuſements, and Public Diverſions.

To procure the great benefit of a reaſonable and uniform price of the article of firſt neceſſity to man, the capital to be employed for the City of London, is 2,120,000 pounds, for which capital the proprietors would be juſtly entitled to a reaſonable profit. This profit, like other mercantile profits, muſt ariſe from the conſumers, and including therein the expences of management, might be regulated by raiſing the preſent aſſize tables ten per cent. higher than the actual rate.

If

If the Public would be greatly benefited in having bread always at an uniform price, thoſe who procure them that benefit, would certainly be moſt juſtly entitled to a recompence. Shall it be ſaid, that the inhabitants of London expend annually, in diverſions, above 245,000 pounds, and would ſcruple to expend annually 212,000 pounds, in aſſuring to themſelves a conſtant ſupply of bread, without the riſk of its ever riſing to an exorbitant price. The different inſurance offices in London, would not be continued, if the proprietors of them did not draw ſome profits from them; but what elſe would the granaries be but inſurance offices againſt famine, or at leaſt againſt a dearth; and late experience has given us but too ſtrong proofs, that the Nation has paid very dear for not having had ſuch inſurance offices. Do the immenſe breweries in London, yield no profits to their proprietors; or would it be at all reaſonable to expect that the brewers ſhould ſupply the Metropolis with good porter, at a ſteady price from year to year, without any calculation of profit to themſelves, in return for the money laid out by them, in their expenſive buildings and utenſils, and for the time and labour they beſtow on the buſineſs. If the proprietors of the granaries would furniſh bread for the conſumption of London, at as uniform and ſteady a price as the London brewers furniſh malt liquor, would not the general benefit be as great in the one caſe as in the other, and would

they not have juſt as good a claim to a reaſonble profit as the brewers, more eſpecially as they might be the inſtruments of preventing many others from making exorbitant profits. Of this the late Albion Mills afford a ſtriking example, for during the few years they exiſted, they are ſaid to have ſaved to the Metropolis 800,000 pounds. In like manner the directors of the granaries, by the correſpondence they would eſtabliſh over the whole Kingdom, would remove many obſtructions that the London markets are now liable to, and would thereby bring the annual prices upon an average lower than they now are, or otherwiſe would be; ſo that notwithſtanding the propoſed addition to the aſſize, bread would in general not riſe in price, but would actually come as cheap, if not cheaper, to the conſumer than at preſent. It would only be a transfer of profits from thoſe who advantage the Public nothing, to thoſe who would advantage the Public a great deal. Thus thoſe who tranſport goods by canals, transfer to themſelves the profits of thoſe perſons, who before tranſported ſuch goods by land carriage. It is indifferent to the conſumers who receives the profit, provided they be as well ſerved in the one caſe as in the other. But if they be better ſerved, it is no longer indifferent to them who receive the profits. They will give every encouragement to thoſe whoſe ſyſtem promiſes to be accompanied with the greateſt advantage. If this circumſtance

is made the teſt in regard to the eſtabliſhment of granaries, it will moſt effectually operate in favour of them, more eſpecially when it is conſidered who ſhould be the proprietors of them, to whom the profits would accrue.

The proprietors ought to be the inhabitants of London themſelves; and ſo of every Town and City throughout the Kingdom, where granaries ſhall be eſtabliſhed, by which means the management and the profits would always remain concentrated in each place reſpectively. It can I think hardly be doubted, but the full conviction of the private, as well as public benefits ariſing from the granaries, would quickly procure a capital by an open ſubſcription, which ſhould be rendered as comprehenſive as poſſible. In London therefore no particular ſubſcription ſhould exceed 10,000 pounds; but ſubſcriptions ſhould be admitted for houſeholders as low as 20 pounds; and for ſervants and ſervant maids as low as 15 pounds. Should the Corporation of London, or any of its Public Companies be inclined to become ſubſcribers, they ſhould be admitted to ſubſcribe for more than 10,000 pounds. The ſubſcribers or ſtockholders, ſhould manage their own concerns by governors annually choſen by themſelves, which for the Metropolis might be 24 in number, with a ſalary not exceeding 200 pounds each; and the dividends on the capitals ſhould be paid half yearly.

Though I have reſtricted my calculations chiefly to the City of London, they may moſt eaſily be extended to the whole Kingdom; and I mean that they ſhould be ſo extended. My reaſoning equally applies to every large City, to every town and every pariſh throughout Great Britain and Ireland. If the proverb which ſays, *Store is no ſore*, contains an acknowledged ſolid maxim, the ſtoring of ſuch a ſupply of corn as would prevent a future ſcarcity, ought not to be confined to one City, or one Town; but ought equally to be the concern of every Town in theſe Iſlands. That ſuch a ſupply would in the beginning coſt ſomething, can no more be an objection to it, than that a ſtock of houſehold furniture cannot be procured without coſting ſomething. The capital for the City of London, we have ſeen, would amount to about 2,120,000 pounds; and reckoning ſeven times as much for the whole Iſland of Great Britain, it would make in all 17 millions.

Ths ſum of 17 millions (hardly exceeding two pounds a head for all the inhabitants) would form the ſpare ſupply of the whole nation in corn, and when we compare it with the reſerved ſtock of the nation in houſehold furniture, it will be found to be altogether inconſiderable. This laſt, which is a capital yielding no income, would probably be much under eſtimated, when valued at 200 millions. Nevertheleſs it is ſo far from being deemed

deemed a burden, that there is perhaps not a maſter or miſtreſs of a family in the Kingdom, that do not think themſelves happy, when they have it in their power to augment it. What family thinks itſelf poorer by purchaſing a new bed, additional table linen, a new ſet of chairs, a looking glaſs, &c. All the return expected for the capital ſunk on ſuch an occaſion, is convenience. The convenience in moſt caſes more than counterbalancing the coſt, the buyer with ſatisfaction, concludes that the money is well laid out.

If ſuch in general is the concluſion in regard to the immenſe capital, ſunk in the purchaſe of houſehold furniture; and if the inhabitants ſo far from thinking ſuch capital a burden, would from the conveniences which accompany it, wiſh to enlarge it; the capital employed in providing a ſpare ſupply of corn, would be ſtill more entitled to be conſidered in the ſame light, as it would be attended not alone with convenience, but with economy likewiſe. For ſuch a capital, excluſive of the immediate convenience of furniſhing bread, at a reaſonable and ſteady price, would, in caſe of a ſcanty harveſt, be the means not only of preventing two or three millions of pounds from being ſent out of the country to purchaſe foreign corn, but would ſave to the conſumers of bread, a riſe of 50 or 60 per cent. in the price of that article, which they lately paid,

paid, from our improvident neglect, in not having a ſpare ſupply of corn.

The friendly ſocieties at preſent exiſting in many parts of the Kingdom, are allowed to be attended with advantages to their reſpective members. But do not thoſe advantages take their origin from the weekly payments, made by the members themſelves. The advantages received are only returns for the aſſeſſments made, and though the benefits are never univerſal to all the members, the aſſeſſments are nevertheleſs univerſal. If this circumſtance has at no time been ſtated as an objection to the uſefulneſs of thoſe friendly ſocieties, much leſs can it be urged againſt the eſtabliſhment of granaries, according to the plan propoſed; for in this caſe the benefits would actually extend univerſally, and the immediate ſubſcribers would only partake of them ſomewhat more largely than the others.

The plan of granaries, when adopted throughout the Iſland, would in effect turn the whole nation into friendly ſocieties, all uniting by their joint operation to render the importation of foreign corn for ever unneceſſary, to keep the markets for grain more uniform, and to prevent the price of it, even when the harveſt is ſcanty, from exceeding the ability of the poor to purchaſe it. To theſe advantages it may be added, that the granaries would for eight years give an animating ſpur to the induſtry of the farmers, which would bring

along with it an increaſe of population with all the benefits attendant on ſuch an increaſe, and after the home additional demand ceaſed, might be a means of recovering the trade of the exportation of corn formerly ſo profitable to the Nation.

While the benefit of the granaries is preparing for the Public, the ſubſcribers, who are the inſtruments of that benefit, ought to draw a revenue in proportion to the capital annually advanced by them. Thus taking the Metropolis for an example, it has before been calculated that it would require about 2,120,000 pounds to provide a ſpare ſupply of wheat for one year's conſumption of the inhabitants of London; and if the ſurpluſes of eight harveſts would be required to compleat this ſupply, that would infer an annual advance from the ſubſcribers of 265,000 pounds, for eight years ſucceſſively. The intereſt at five per cent. upon this advance, would for the firſt year amount to 13,250 pounds, or about one halfpenny per week upon each family in the Metropolis. The ſecond year, ſuppoſing an equal advance to be made by the ſubſcribers, the intereſt would amount to one penny per week upon each family. The third year to three halfpence, and in the eighth year when the granaries were completed, and fully ſtored, to a weekly payment of four pence upon each family, or about 106,000 pounds per annum. But as on every permanent

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eſtabliſhment where management is required, an allowance muſt be made for that management, as alſo for repairs, waſte, and accidents, I have ſtated that the annual expence of granaries for the Metropolis would probably amount to about as much more as the ſum above mentioned, or to 212,000 pounds, which is conſiderably leſs than what the article of diverſions coſts the inhabitants of London annually; and lower than the weekly aſſeſſments of any of the friendly ſocieties.

Were this annual expence to be really an additional expence to the inhabitants of London; yet when the many advantages ariſing from the granaries, are carefully conſidered, and weighed againſt it, which they ought to be, few people I think will doubt but that the preponderance will be greatly in favour of the granaries, and that they would be moſt cheaply purchaſed even at a larger expence. But there is the greateſt reaſon to preſume, as I have before obſerved, that the annual expence accompanying the eſtabliſhment of granaries, would not be an additional expence, but would only be a transfer of expence.

Nay I am inclined to think the granaries would even prove on the whole a leſſening of expence to the inhabitants; and this I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate, by adding a few words in regard to the future proviſion of London, on the ſuppoſition that the granaries are fully ſtored with one year's ſpare ſupply; and that the directors of them

them ſhould at the option of the buyers, furniſh the markets with flour as well as with wheat. The expence of the granaries we have ſeen would amount to about eight pence per week to each family in the Metropolis; and it may I think be juſtly preſumed, that if the traffic in corn were freed from its preſent obſtructions, and the practices of the millers, now ſo grievouſly complained of, were kept under ſome controul, each family might ſave in the price of bread above eight pence per week, in which caſe the inhabitants of London would be at leſs expence in that article than at preſent; *and would have the granaries with all their ſtores into the bargain.*

This indeed is concluding much more than is neceſſary in behalf of the granaries. The eſſential advantages they would procure to the Nation would be a full compenſation for the Capital they would require, though the laſt mentioned advantage were not be obtained. Nevertheleſs it ought to be kept in view, and could it be obtained, it would render the eſtabliſhment of granaries ſtill more uſeful to the public.

The price of flour when compared to the price of wheat, is very generally complained of as exorbitant; and certainly the manner in which the London market is at preſent ſupplied with wheat, and other grain, indicates that the ſources of ſupply are not ſo ſufficiently explored throughout the Kingdom, as they might be, or as they would

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be, were ſuch a regular correſpondence eſtabliſhed with every county, as would bring the farmers into immediate contact with the great purchaſer in the Capital.

On the ſuppoſition that there is a twelvemonth's ſpare ſupply of wheat or flour lodged in the granaries, the bakers in the Metropolis, and the millers in the vicinity, might at their option be ſupplied with flour and wheat from the granaries, at ſuch a price as ſhould be agreed upon between them and the directors, who in return ſhould be entitled to be the firſt bidders for all wheat or flour brought by individuals to the London market. Thus the directors of the granaries would be continual ſellers and continual buyers, without any monopoly exiſting; for if the bakers and millers did not like the price of the directors, they might buy elſewhere; and if thoſe who brought wheat or flour to the London market, did not like the offer of the directors, they might ſell elſewhere.

Should the weekly ſupply not equal the weekly conſumption, the directors of the granaries would always be ready to make good the deficiency; and ſhould that ſupply exceed the conſumption, they would prevent a ſtagnation in the markets, by affording a fair price for the ſurpluſes. Nay ſhould the deficiency of ſupply even extend to ſeveral weeks, it would not affect the general market, as the directors could ſtill anſwer the

demand

demand from the granaries, without any hazard of draining them too much, becauſe from their extenſive correſpondence freſh ſupplies from ſome quarter or another, would be continually on their way to the Capital, either by ſea, or by inland navigation, or by land carriage; and the tardineſs in one month, would be compenſated by the more ſpeedy conveyance in another month. Thus were London to have in magazines a twelvemonth's ſpare ſupply of coals, there would be no occaſion to alter the price of that commodity, though the navigation of the Thames ſhould be obſtructed for ſeveral weeks together by a hard froſt. The coals that were then wanted might be drawn from the magazines, which might be again ſtored with their uſual ſupply upon the return of mild weather.

Thus far in regard to the operation of the granaries in years of ordinary abundance. Let us now conſider what it might be in caſe of the calamity of a bad harveſt. When a harveſt fails that misfortune is generally well known, before the ſeaſon arrives for ſowing the ſeed for the following harveſt. In proportion then to the deficiency of the harveſt newly reaped, let preparation be made for increaſing the abundance of next year's crop, by a renewal of the premium to the farmers upon ſuch an additional number of acres as may be found requiſite. For example, taking the number of ſown acres in Great Britain

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in common years at nine millions, as before calculated, and ſuppoſing the deficiency of any harveſt to have been as great as to require an augmentation of one fourth to the number of acres in the following ſeed-time, that would occaſion a demand upon Government of 600,000 pounds in bounties.

I have ſuppoſed a deficiency of crop, much beyond what Great Britain has experienced for theſe hundred years paſt, or perhaps has ever experienced, in order that the importance of having always a ſpare ſupply of corn at home, may appear with the greater evidence. Should a deficiency of crop actually amount to one fourth, Great Britain without granaries could not ſecure herſelf againſt the bad effects of ſuch a deficiency for a leſs ſum than ſeven or eight millions ſent out of the kingdom; but Great Britain with granaries might prevent the inconveniencies of ſuch a deficiency for 600,000 pounds, circulated within its own territory, and thereby promoting induſtry among her inhabitants. What a wide difference between the two ſyſtems of adminiſtration.

The farmers being thus induced to lay the foundation of an ample ſupply for the future harveſt, the directors of the granaries throughout the Kingdom, would that year ſell one fourth more than they purchaſed; and by purchaſing the following year one fourth more than they ſold, they would fully replace the deficiency, and at the

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ſame time would create a market to the farmers for the ſurpluſes they had produced. By theſe operations Great Britain will realize one of the moſt important of political principles, *Sibi ſufficit*, ſufficient to herſelf; and a ſcarcity, when it happened, ſo far from creating diſtreſs and murmuring among the people, would hardly occaſion any alteration in the prices of the markets.

Having thus treated of the extent of the capital that would be required to ſtore in granaries a year's ſupply of corn, for the whole Kingdom, and explained how by premiums to the farmers that ſupply might be furniſhed from our own territory; and alſo who ought to be the proprietors of that capital, and from what ſources the profits upon that capital ought to ariſe, I ſhall now add a few obſervations relative to the conſtruction of the granaries, particularly in the Metropolis; and to the beſt and ſafeſt method of preſerving the grain or flour in the Granaries.

The average yearly conſumption of London, has been ſtated at 800,000 quarters of wheat, conſequently to ſtore ſuch a quantity properly, would require 16 millions of cubic feet, or about 24 buildings of the ſize or capacity of the late Albion Mills, which building indeed might very properly ſerve for one of them. Suppoſing each of thoſe buildings to coſt 5000 pounds, the whole would then, as before ſtated, occaſion an expence of 120,000 pounds. The Eaſt India Company,

ſor merchandizes of mere luxury, have not ſcrupled a larger expence in warehouſes, which in a manner fill whole ſtreets in London. Now a full ſupply of bread, or of the material of bread, is certainly of much greater importance to the inhabitants of the Metropolis, than a full ſupply of tea or of pepper, conſequently granaries for the former, may not unjuſtly be deemed as requiſite as warehouſes for the latter. That London long before this time has not had to boaſt of its elegant granaries, as well as of its ſumptuous warehouſes, and ſumptuous brewhouſes, is to be attributed rather to the total neglect of ſyſtem in the corn trade, than to any deficiency in point of capital, or of ſpirit and enterprize in its inhabitants. We learn from Mr. Yarranton, a ſkilful engineer and public ſpirited man, who in the laſt century was employed for ſeveral years in viſiting Germany and other States on the Continent, for political and manufacturing purpoſes, that the ſingle City of Magdebourg could boaſt of 300 granaries *.

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* Holland every one knows is diſtinguiſhed for its granaries; but ſo is Geneva, Berne, Genoa, Rome, Naples, and many other cities. Among Mr. Haſtings's meritorious ſervices in Bengal is reckoned the eſtabliſhment of granaries; and the granaries in China are mentioned by Sir George Staunton. In the Statiſtical Account of Scotland, publiſhed by Sir John Sinclair, Vol. 14. p. 375. we have the following account of a granary in the burrough of Linlithgow. "Be-

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As by far the greateſt quantity of corn for the ſupply of London is brought by water, the granaries would be moſt conveniently ſituated upon the banks of the Thames, ſix or eight of them on the Surry ſhore, from Lambeth to Rotherhithe, and double that number upon the Middleſex ſide; and they might be ſo conſtructed as to be ornamental on the banks of the River, now in many places ſo neglected as to be a deformity and nuiſance. It is needleſs here to enter into any details in regard to the form of the buildings, as that will depend in a great degree upon local circumſtances, and may afterwards be the ſubject of conſideration.

In regard to the manner of preſerving the corn or flour in the granaries, I think there is very great room for improvement. This very eſſential point not having hitherto been ſufficiently attended to, and reflected upon, has, I am perſuaded, been one of the chief cauſes why the practice of ſtoring corn has been ſo much neglected. Were

" ſides the funds which the Corporation (or Trades) have
" for the poor, with whom they are ſeverally connected,
" they have adopted a plan, of which the good effects are
" ſenſibly felt. They have a repoſitory capable of contain-
" ing 600 Bolls of meal. This they ſell at a proper time;
" and if application be made, the town advances 100l. with-
" out intereſt. Thus they have always a quantity to anſwer
" demands, *are enabled to regulate the price of the markets,*
" *and prevent private retailers from taking an improper advantage*
" *of circumſtances.*"

a method deviſed, by which corn might be kept for years without waſte, and without ſpoiling, the cultivation of it with the view of ſtoring it, as well as ſupplying the preſent market, might enter into the economy of the farmers, who would then be without alarm in caſe of an abundant harveſt, or of half a dozen abundant harveſts. Some agricultural writers, as I have before obſerved, tell us, that at preſent two or three abundant harveſts in ſucceſſion, would ruin the farmers; and ſo would two or three abundant vintages, in ſucceſſion, ruin the proprietors of vineyards, if they had not caſks or bottles, in which to ſtore the wine. Abundance of corn, inſtead of being a curſe as at preſent, would, as an abundance of wine, become a bleſſing, if people knew how to preſerve the abundance when it arrived. The farmers reſource is to preſerve the ſuper-abundant corn in the ſtraw, which in many caſes is making a preſent of a great proportion of it to the rats and mice; and the expedient of the merchants and corn dealers is to ſpread it on floors, and to turn it frequently, which however does not ſecure it from the weevil and other vermin, or from being damaged by mouldineſs.

We have the experience that things much more corruptible than corn, are preſerved many years by being wholly excluded from the common air. Why may not we then conclude, that by the ſame means corn might be preſerved many years. Upon this principle, were the corn in the granaries, in-

ſtead of being ſpread upon floors, to be incloſed in earthen jars of a large ſize, ſimilar to thoſe brought from Italy with oil, which are to be ſeen before the doors of ſeveral ſhops in London, it might in all probability be preſerved without damage for many years. Flour in particular would be much better preſerved in ſuch jars than in caſks, which not being completely air tight, too commonly generate mites or weevils, that often devour great part of it. Formerly a great ſupply of flour was annually ſent in caſks from France to the Weſt India Iſlands: but at Bourdeaux, from whence the greateſt part of it was ſhipped, I was told that not unfrequently before ſuch flour reached the Weſt Indies, it was either ſpoilt, or in part deſtroyed by vermin. Had this flour been packed in jars inſtead of caſks, and the mouths of the jars cloſely ſtopped, it may I think be preſumed that the damage and loſs would have been avoided; and the ſame jars that carried out the flour, might have brought back the ſugar, which would have ſaved the repeated expence of hogſheads, to be renewed each voyage, and alſo prevented an annual waſte of the ſugar from leakage, which is ſaid to be very conſiderable.

It ought to be no objection to this mode of preſerving the corn, that it would in the beginning add to the expence, becauſe the complete preſervation of the corn would fully indemnify the Public for that expence. Nobody ſcruples

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the expence of bottles to preſerve wine; and in France were the number of bottles annually filled with wine to be filled with flour, the French people would never be in any hazard of a dearth, or a ſcarcity of bread. Now flour is intrinſically much more valuable than wine. Had Captain Bligh, in his perilous voyage of 2000 miles in an undecked boat, without proviſions, touched at an iſland, where he might have had at his choice 100 bottles of flour, or 1000 bottles of wine, he would without any heſitation have preferred the flour. Were the real value of flour or corn to be always kept in view, as it ever ought to be by a wiſe government and a prudent people, the moſt effectual means of preſerving them would be thought much more worthy of their attention than the means of preſerving wine or beer.* In reſpect to wine or beer contained in bottles, the veſſel containing, though originally of as great value as what is contained in it, yet from its long durability, and the ſhort duration of what is contained, it may in the courſe of a century, not be the hundredth part of the value of what in that

* In France, in an abundant vintage, it has been ſaid, that a poſſeſſor of new caſks, has received a caſk-full of wine for his caſk; that is, the caſk, and the wine contained in it, were of equal value; and in the Province of Burgundy I have drunk wine, better than what is commonly called Burgundy in England, a quart of which nevertheleſs would have been given for three glaſs bottles; that is, the *Container* was one third of the value of the *Contained*.

time

time it has contained. This would very nearly be the caſe in reſpect to the method I have propoſed for preſerving flour; for ſuppoſing each jar to hold a ſack of flour, that jar might in the courſe of a century, hold 100 ſacks of flour, conſequently from this conſideration no objection could ariſe againſt the uſe of jars, more than againſt the uſe of bottles. Sure I am that ſome farmers would have ſaved conſiderably, if they had uſed this method of preſerving their grain, inſtead of wooden granaries detached from their barns.

The ſubject here treated of, notwithſtanding its great importance, having hitherto been in a manner wholly overlooked by political writers, a firſt attempt to form it into a ſyſtem, will, I hope, meet with indulgence from the reader. I give to the Public the preceding conſiderations, only in the manner of a draught of a Parliamentary Bill, to receive improvements and amendments from thoſe whoſe abilities, and means of information, are greater than mine.

THE END.